

Application No. 10/043,761
Reply to Office Action of January 16, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 2-18 are currently pending in this application, as amended. Claim 1 has been canceled. Claims 2, 12-15 and 18 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 5. Accordingly, no new matter is added by the amendments.

This Amendment is proper after final, since it does not raise any new issues and places the application in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully submit that: (1) no new matter has been added to the application by the amendment; (2) the amendment resolves all issues raised by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed January 16, 2004; (3) the subject matter of the amendment already has been included in the Examiner's search and therefore does not require the Examiner to perform further searching; and (4) the amendment places the application in condition for allowance or in better condition for appeal.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully request that the Amendment After Final Rejection be entered in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §116 and MPEP 714.13. In particular, entry of the Amendment herein is requested under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because such Amendment does not raise any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search since the remaining claims were either indicated to be allowable or have been amended to depend from an allowable claim.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 2-4 and 12-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,452,878 ("Gravensen *et al.*," hereinafter, "Gravensen") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,380,396 ("Shikida *et al.*," hereinafter, "Shikida").

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-4 and 12-18 is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner has stated that claims 5-11 are allowable. Claims 2, 12-15 and 18 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 5. Original claims 3-4, as written, depend from

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claim 2. Original claims 16-17, as written, depend from claim 15. Accordingly, claims 2-4 and 12-18 are allowable because of their dependence upon allowable claim 5, and because they each recite additional patentable features.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 2-4 and 12-18 be withdrawn.

Claim 1 has been canceled, and therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) with respect to claim 1 has been effectively rendered moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has stated that claims 5-11 are allowed.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing Amendment and Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application, including claims 2-18, is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

DIAO XU *et al.*

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(Date)

By:

MARTIN G. BELISARIO Reg No 37987

Registration No. 32,886

AKIN GUMP STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

One Commerce Square

2005 Market Street, Suite 2200

Philadelphia, PA 19103-7013

Telephone: 215-965-1200

Direct Dial: 215-965-1303

Facsimile: 215-965-1210

E-Mail: mbelisario@akingump.com

MGB/JDS/krh

Enclosures